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REPORT ON LOCAL CONFERENCES.

At the meeting of the National Conference in New York, Oct. 8th, 1868, on motion of Rev. J. C. Kimball, it was resolved —

"That the secretaries of the various Local Conferences, with Rev. Mr. Scandlin of the Worcester Conference as chairman, be a committee to report on the condition and working of these bodies up to the present time, and to form and carry out some plan embodying the principles contained in the paper presented by Rev. Mr. Scandlin, for a more thorough organization in our separate societies, and for greater uniformity of action and efficiency in doing the work of the denomination."

At a meeting of the secretaries of the Local Conferences, held Feb. 16th, Rev. Messrs. Scandlin, Fish, and Lowe were requested to act as a special committee to prepare the report called for in the above resolution; and they would respectfully submit the following: —

HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN AND FORMATION OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCES.

At the meeting of the National Conference held in Syracuse, Oct. 10 and 11, 1866, Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following resolutions, which were adopted: —

Resolved, That we extend to the Maine Conference, and the New-Hampshire Association, our congratulations for the success with which they have entered upon the organization of their churches for missionary work.

Resolved, That for increased efficiency of denominational action, the Conference recommend the establishment of other Local Conferences, to meet at fixed periods, at convenient points, for the organization of missionary work on a plan similar to that of the Maine and New-Hampshire Associations.

Resolved, That the Council be directed to define the appropriate limits of such Local Conferences, and appoint at an early day meetings of the pastors and delegates to this convention, at such points as may seem expedient for the organization of missionary work in the regions which may be there represented.

Resolved, That the officers of the Western Conference be requested to make the necessary arrangements for such conferences within the Western States.

In accordance with these resolutions, the Council requested Rev. Charles Lowe, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, to prepare the draft of a Constitution and a plan for the organization of such conferences. This draft was submitted to the Council at a meeting held Oct. 31, 1866, and, after some modifications, agreed to; and a committee was appointed to bring the matter before the churches, and to take measures for putting it into operation.

The action of this committee is embodied in the following Circular, which was sent to every society in our denomination eastward of the limits of the Western Conference:

ROOMS OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
26, Chauncy St., between Summer and Bedford Sts.,

BOSTON, Mass., Nov. 8, 1866.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN, — At a meeting of the National Council of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, held in

Boston, Oct. 31, the organization of Local Conferences was considered; and, after mature deliberation, the undersigned were appointed a committee to prepare and present to the churches, in the form of a recommendation, the plan which the Council had there agreed upon.

In order to secure a more general interchange of views, and to ascertain more fully the wishes of different members of our body, the committee invited one or more of our ministers from every local association to meet and discuss the plan proposed. These gentlemen have met to-day, and concurred with the plan, which is accordingly herewith submitted.

1. It is proposed that the churches east of the limits of the Western Conference shall all group themselves, as may be agreed upon between the individual societies and the several Local Conferences, around the following centres; each one of these centres to constitute a Local Conference, to be designated by such local name as it may choose to assume.

1. Maine.
2. New Hampshire.
3. Vermont (including the Churches in Canada, if they decide to unite with it).
4. The Connecticut Valley.
5. North Middlesex, Mass.
6. South Middlesex (including Charlestown).
7. Suffolk County, Mass.
8. Essex County, Mass.
9. Norfolk County, Mass.
10. Worcester County, Mass.
11. The Plymouth and Bay Association, Mass.
12. Bristol County and Rhode Island.
13. New York and vicinity and the Hudson River.
14. Central New York.
15. The other Middle and the Southern States.

2. It is recommended, that, at the earliest practicable moment, within each of these limits, a movement shall be begun so as to secure a meeting for definite organizations, if possible, before the middle of December. It is desirable that in the

Almanac, or Year-Book, to be issued by the American Unitarian Association Jan. 1, the statistics may be given of each one of these Conferences.

3. In order to give as much uniformity as possible to the various organizations, the following plan for a Constitution is submitted for the consideration of the Conferences, — it being of course understood that it is only by way of suggestion; each Conference being at liberty to modify or to reject it, as it may decide expedient: —

PLAN OF CONSTITUTION.

Article I.

This Conference shall be called, "The ——— Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches."

Article II.

The object of this Conference shall be to promote the religious life and mutual sympathy of the churches which unite in it, and to enable them to co-operate in missionary work, and in raising funds for various Christian purposes.

Article III.

The members of the Conference shall be the pastor and six lay delegates (male or female) from every parish included within it.

Article IV.

The officers of this Conference shall be a President, who shall be a layman; two Vice-Presidents, one layman and one clergyman; six Directors, three laymen and three clergymen; a Secretary, who shall be a clergyman; and a Treasurer, who shall be a layman; said officers to be chosen annually, at a regular meeting of the Conference.

Article V.

There shall be not less than ——— meetings of this Conference every year.

Article VI.

The officers of the Conference shall meet at least once in three months to consult together upon the interests of the organization. They shall arrange for the meetings of the Conference, and have charge of its general concerns. They shall, after a careful survey of the field, assign to every parish included in the Conference a

certain district, conveniently situated with reference to it, over which its pastor and delegates shall be expected to exercise a special care.

ARTICLE VII.

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Conference; in his absence, the senior Vice-President shall assume all the duties of the President.

ARTICLE VIII.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all moneys of the Conference, and disburse the same under the direction of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of the meetings of the Conference, and also of the condition of the churches, and the various work of the Conference; and he shall report at least once a year to the National Council. He shall also keep himself acquainted with the opportunities for missionary work within the limits of the Conference, and aid, so far as he can, in promoting the various objects of the organization. He shall advise with the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, and co-operate with him in the carrying out of the work. He shall receive from the American Unitarian Association, as compensation for his service, such sum as may be determined by the Conference, and by the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association, and shall, if feasible, act as a missionary of the Association in the limits of the Conference.

ARTICLE X.

Parishes may be admitted to the Conference by a majority vote of members present at a regular meeting of the Conference, after recommendation by the Board of Directors of the Conference.

ARTICLE XI.

Changes in this Constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting, and all changes in the Constitution shall be made known by letter to the Secretary of the National Conference.

4. There are certain further recommendations and suggestions which the Council would beg to submit.

(*a*) Art. I. is framed so as to give a uniformity, simply sub-

stituting the local name for the word "National" in the title adopted by the National Conference.

(*b*) In regard to the frequency of the meetings, the Council feel strongly that one of the great objects to be gained by the proposed organizations is the renewed life and vigor which are to be acquired from mutual sympathy between the churches, and that this is greatly aided by such meetings as are contemplated. They would recommend that there shall be not less than two, and, if practicable, four meetings of each Conference every year. They would recommend that at these meetings all the various objects and interests of the denominations shall be discussed; that, perhaps, one of the meetings shall be especially devoted to the consideration of matters pertaining to the Sunday school; another especially to the subject of raising money for the American Unitarian Association; and that, at least once a year, reports shall be given of the condition of every parish, and of the missionary work within the limits of the Conference.

(*c*) Another suggestion is connected with Art. VI. of the proposed Constitution. Of course, nothing is to be done that shall interfere with the perfect congregational liberty of the churches. But it is hoped, that, so far as this will allow, the pastors and delegates of the various parishes will consent to accept from the officers of their own Conference the particular field designated by them, and co-operate in such missionary work within these limits as may lie in their power, — *e.g.*, to ascertain individuals and families of liberal views and sympathies, who are connected with no Liberal Church, and try to bring them into such relations; to organize Sunday schools and societies; to supply occasional preaching where there is promise of good results; to circulate our liberal literature; to seek out and encourage young men for our ministry; and in every way labor to advance the interests of the cause, and, within their own societies, to have charge of the work of raising money for the purposes of the denomination.

(*d*) It is intended by Art. IX. to suggest that the secretary of each Conference shall be the person especially responsible for the work of the organization; and it is recommended that

he shall receive a compensation for his services, either from the American Unitarian Association or otherwise, as may be deemed most expedient.

(*e*) It is further recommended, that, whenever it may be deemed advisable, a meeting shall be called of the secretaries of the various Conferences by the National Council, so as to secure a certain uniformity of action, and so as to afford to each Conference the benefit of the experiences of the rest.

The Council would earnestly commend these suggestions to the parishes for immediate consideration, and for such action as they may severally believe to be expedient.

We are, with sympathy and respect,

Very truly yours.

CHARLES LOWE,
WARREN SAWYER,
EDWARD E. HALE,
} *Committee of Council.*

It will be seen that all this was offered merely by way of suggestion. Afterwards, in the calling of the Conventions, the invitation was simply that they should come together "to *consider the expediency* of establishing a Local Conference." And, in like manner, in all the preliminary steps, care was taken to avoid whatever might seem like forcing societies into the organization or like a violation of their congregational independence.

Acting in this spirit, the Committee found on every hand entire readiness on the part of the churches; and the result was, that, on the 17th April, 1867, fourteen Conferences had been organized, in addition to the New-Hampshire Association and the Maine Conference, which were already established before the meeting in Syracuse, and which simply adopted such modifications of their existing Constitutions as seemed desirable for the purpose of uniformity.

The several Conferences thus formed generally adopted substantially the Constitution proposed by the Council, modifying it here and there in certain particulars.

Since their organization, the Conferences have met regularly, twice or three times or four times each year, according as their several Constitutions have provided. There have also been meetings of the various secretaries from time to time, held for the purpose of consultation, and to arrange together for a more systematic working. Eight of such meetings have been held during the two years, attended, on an average, by about twelve out of the seventeen secretaries of the Conferences lying east of the Alleghanies, to which this report mainly refers. These secretaries' meetings have been exceedingly valuable; and the comparison of views and experiences, for which they have afforded the occasion, has given the best encouragement as to the benefit to be expected from the conference system.

We attach much importance also to the proposal which has begun already to be carried out, that the secretary or some other representative of every Conference shall, if practicable, attend the meetings of other Conferences.

RESULTS OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCES.

1. When we come to speak of the results of the Local Conferences as thus far apparent, we have no hesitation in pronouncing far the most important the quickening influence they have had on the individual parishes. Of course, this is not easy to specify, or to note with the precision required in a report. And yet no one can have been conversant with the condition of our societies, without being satisfied that this good effect has been very great and unmistakable. We could easily point to instances where old established societies have developed fresh enthusiasm and activity; to others where societies that had seemed nearly dead have been revived and renewed, and others where new and struggling efforts have been encouraged and made strong in hope and purpose and

action, — all through the mere stimulus and friendly sympathy induced by these conference meetings and the interest kindled by the discussions. This general benefit is well stated in the Report of the Connecticut Valley Conference made in May, 1868.

"Our Conference is doing us a great deal of good in a variety of ways. 1. Our people are interested in the meetings. If they go once, they are eager to go again. It has come to be a thing looked forward to with pleasant anticipations. Where and when is the next Conference to be held ? is the inquiry often made. It brings the people of our several parishes together, and makes them better acquainted with each other; and so establishes a new bond of interest among us. Pleasant acquaintances are there made, and lasting friendships established. 2. Then, again, the people are made acquainted with what is going on in the denomination. Its new enterprises and hopes and plans they hear discussed, and so catch something of the new spirit that is stirring among us. 3. Our work is far better organized than it ever was before. We know better where to work and whom to call upon. We have a survey of the whole field. We know better where it is worth while to attempt a new organization. 4. Our weak societies feel the influence of the Conference. They feel that there is a power behind them to sustain them. They feel that they are not alone, struggling on without sympathy, but that there are those who feel an interest in them, and are ready to help them. If they are in want of pecuniary aid or of a pastor, they know to whom to apply for assistance."

In order that this benefit may be fully enjoyed, it is, of course, necessary that the people in our parishes should be as generally as possible interested in them. The most urgent recommendation which the Committee have to make in reference to the Conferences is, that more pains be taken to bring them to the knowledge of our congregations. It has been a matter of surprise to see that while a portion in any society will be full of enthusi-

asm upon them, another portion will hardly know that they exist. We advise that before each meeting of a Conference, along with the notice, some account be given by every pastor to his congregation of its purpose and character; and that, after each meeting, *a report of it be given by the delegates, in every society belonging to it;* or, better yet, that the Sunday afternoon following, or some other suitable time, be devoted to a familiar presentation and discussion of the topics there considered and the work there proposed.

2. But the conference system has shown other and yet more tangible results. It has, to some extent, served the purpose of practical efficiency in action. For example: The collections for the American Unitarian Association had been made in a wholly unsystematic way, from the societies; and, among the first measures in connection with the Conferences, a plan was considered for systematizing this, and making it a regular part of the conference work. At one of the meetings of the secretaries, the subject was carefully discussed; and the amount which the churches had proposed that the Association should ask for, was apportioned to the several Conferences; and this being referred to the Conferences at their next meeting, in almost every case the Conference agreed to do its utmost to raise the amount.

It was expected that such a plan would require time in order to be fully realized; but it has already proved efficient to a most gratifying degree. In one of the Conferences, without any direct effort on the part of the officers of the American Unitarian Association, the full amount apportioned has been paid in for two successive years, and in others nearly the full amount. Experience has so far demonstrated the feasibility and the comparative facility of this action, that the Committee confidently urge

that those who have the management of the several Conferences will exert themselves to make the same success universal. The raising of our money for our various purposes may thus be completely systematized and regularly depended upon.

3. Another important result of the formation of the Conferences has been more system in the missionary work of the denomination. This result was aimed at, and to some extent realized, immediately on the formation of the Conferences, in so far that the officers of the American Unitarian Association, in directing their efforts and distributing their aid, consulted with the officers of Local Conferences, and availed themselves of their personal acquaintance with the position and needs of places within their neighborhood and jurisdiction. But this advantage has been gradually increasing by the maturing of plans for closer and more active co-operation. The Conferences have generally adopted plans for local missionary work. In these plans they aim to make every minister and every society interested to undertake such work within their own region of influence, and to report opportunities that may present themselves. At the meetings of the Conferences or of the Board of Officers, these reports are considered; and there have been between them and the American Unitarian Association such intimate relations, that, whenever occasion has required, the Conferences or their officers have been sure of the co-operation of the Association.

So excellent have been the workings of this arrangement, that recently plans have been made and partly put in operation for its yet more vigorous prosecution. The Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association appropriated a sum of money to be used for missionary purposes, in connection with the secretaries of

Local Conferences: first, to enable the secretaries themselves to do whatever their parochial engagements might allow, and (wherever it might prove desirable) to procure assistants to act under their direction; second, to enable resident ministers to do the missionary service which their position might render possible; third, to employ ministers (or laymen or laywomen) for temporary service, or as regular itinerant missionaries, under the joint direction of the American Unitarian Association and the Local Conferences.

At a recent meeting of the secretaries, it was resolved that the Executive Committees of the several Conferences shall be requested to facilitate this work by a circular to the churches and communities.

Many illustrations could be given of what has been already accomplished in these various ways. Thus, in one instance, a parish once flourishing and influential had been brought by various circumstances into such impaired condition as to make many fear that its existence was imperilled. It was without a minister, had been very little brought into contact with the life of the denomination, and had therefore none of the consciousness of outside sympathy and support. At a meeting of the Conference in whose limits it was situated, words of friendly interest were spoken; and it was finally arranged that the ministers of the Conference should go and preach there in turn, their pulpits being supplied by the American Unitarian Association. The result of this has been to revive the hopes and earnestness of the society and give them new strength.

Without multiplying illustrations, however, we would simply say that this feature of the system of Local Conferences gives sure promise of most excellent results.

4. In some of the Conferences, especial thought and

effort have been directed to the development of life and efficiency in the several parishes. Topics pertaining to this important interest have been discussed, and plans decided on to be recommended to the individual churches. There has been ample evidence of the value of this work of the Conference. Many parishes have adopted plans of organized activity under the stimulus of such conference discussions, and of the example of other parishes there reported, helped also by the consciousness of acting in concert with associated churches.

As an example of this kind of action on the part of the Conferences, we may refer to the Report of the Worcester Conference made in May, 1868, and printed in the June number of the "Monthly Journal" of that year. By this report it appears, that at the second meeting of the Conference, after thorough discussion, a "plan of organization in societies" was adopted and recommended to its members. This plan was intended to "promote more intimate personal acquaintance and mutual co-operation among the members of our societies, . . . a more thorough and systematic training of the young in Christian faith and duties, and a more earnest and active interest among our people in advancing the cause of religion."

This plan contemplated not only effort within each society for its own upbuilding, but also "the purpose of drawing our laity into co-operative Christian labor by missionary work;" and measures were taken, by means of circulars to the churches, and reports from them to the Conference, to secure on the part of each society some active interest in the religious welfare of the localities contiguous to it. We shall presently refer more particularly to this topic.

5. In some of the Conferences, opportunities have been found and improved for associated action in the interests

of our cause. As an illustration of this, we may refer to the Suffolk Conference, whose effort has been especially in this direction.

As one instance of what they have been able to do, we would refer to the Free Theatre Preaching which this Conference inaugurated, and which may be fairly regarded as one of the results of its organization.

Another instance is the formation, under its auspices, of a society called the "Suffolk Union for Christian Work," which has already effected important practical measures, such as would have been impossible except through the power which comes from combination of effort.

We would call especial attention to this feature of the conference system. The importance of the principle of co-operation can hardly be overestimated; and the present aspect of our cause is such as to make it especially desirable that it should be so far as possible used to increase the influence of our churches and to carry forward our common work, and to give to our doctrines and principles the power and prevalence which they are fitted to command.

CONNECTION OF THE CONFERENCES WITH INTERIOR PARISH ORGANIZATION.

The Resolution under which we are acting instructs the Committee "to form and carry out some plan for a more thorough organization in our separate societies, and for greater uniformity and efficiency in doing the work of the denomination."

In response to this, the Committee would say that in many societies plans of organization have long existed. Some have been published in the "Monthly Journal" and elsewhere, all of which are good. Moreover, there are differences in the circumstances and character of dif-

ferent societies, which make it proper and desirable that the plan adopted in any one should be arranged so as to be adapted to its condition. This being understood, the Committee would submit the following, which may be suited to most societies : —

PLAN OF ORGANIZATION.

1. There should be, first, a Committee on the Sunday School, of which the superintendent shall be chairman. Its duties shall embrace all pertaining to its organization, efficiency, and wants.

2. A Committee on Missionary Work. Its duties shall consist of the distribution of our religious literature, ascertaining the actual religious wants of the town, the attendance or non-attendance at church and Sunday school, reporting these facts to the Advisory Committee.

3. A Committee on Charity, whose duty it shall be to take measures to relieve the suffering and needy, and promote other objects of Christian benevolence.

4. A Committee on Social Evils, whose duty it shall be to take note of any evils existing in the community which by combined effort might be redressed, to devise means for such redress, and to lead the society in the work of social reform.

5. A Committee on Denominational Action, whose duty it shall be to keep the society informed of all matters of interest to the denomination; *e.g.*, of the action of our various denominational organizations, and of the new opportunities which from time to time present themselves, and the new kinds of effort which are from time to time entered on.

6. A Committee on Christian Fellowship. This Committee shall extend the hospitality of the society to strangers, aiding any wishing to obtain pews, and promoting the mutual acquaintance of pastor and people. They shall take an interest in those leaving the society, seeing that they receive a letter of introduction to the society of our faith where they may be going, or the one nearest to that point. They shall devise means for the protection and improvement of young persons, and also for strengthening the society by the introduction of new members.

7. An Advisory Committee, composed of the chairmen of the other committees, over which the pastor shall preside. It shall be their duty to consult upon the general interests of the society, discussing means for its prosperity, marking out the stated times in the year for denominational and philanthropic contributions, and the objects for which appeals shall be made; and also to consider the best means of promoting a pure social life, and generally to aid the pastor in his work.

These committees shall hold stated meetings; and it is suggested, that once a month the hour of afternoon service, or else some evening during the week, be devoted to a general meeting of the congregation, to listen to reports of these Committees, and to discuss the topics which they may present.

We would lay particular stress on the suggestion that the various committees hold stated meetings, and that they regularly report to the society and that opportunity be given for a familiar discussion before the society of whatever they may be led to suggest. Without this, there is danger that the interest will abate; and, besides, it is only thus that the society, as a whole, can derive the benefit which is desired.

Furthermore, we would say that, in most cases, the successful working of the organization requires constant and earnest effort on the part of the minister. He must not be discouraged if he finds that the committees do not act as eagerly as he supposed they would. He must accept it as his part to insure promptness of action and the assumption of work by those who are appointed. Let the minister have real faith in it, and he can train up in his church true co-workers and supporters; but he must remember that it is in some sort a process of educating them, and he must be patient if, for a while, the thing does not realize his hopes. It will usually depend on the pastor very much whether this organization shall be merely a plan on paper utterly inefficient, or whether

it shall indeed constitute a living and working Christian church.

In regard to the best means for securing "greater uniformity of action and efficiency in doing the work of the denomination," we would add, by way of suggestion, a passage from the report of the Secretary of the Worcester Conference, explaining what has there been attempted.

To insure attention and continue the work, the following questions were sent to each parish as a basis for their annual report to the Conference, and as a measure to find the opportunity for missionary work in their own local surroundings.

QUESTIONS ON ANNUAL REPORT OF SOCIETY.

1. Legal name, and date of organization of society?
2. Number of families that are regular worshippers, with addition or loss during last year?
3. How many church-members, or communicants?
4. How many and what services are held on Sunday, and what meetings during the week?
5. Known causes of prosperity or decline of the society? Any other particulars which will be of interest, and help to show its condition? And any suggestions as to the way in which the Conference can be of service to the society?
6. How many teachers and how many pupils in the Sunday school, with addition or loss of last year?

QUESTIONS AS GUIDE TO MISSIONARY WORK.

1. Population of town?
2. Proportion of population outside of all religious societies?
3. What religious societies in town, and average attendance of each?
4. Number of villages (in town) of sufficient importance to have a store, post-office, or public hall; and how many of said villages are without any religious service?
5. Can you give the names of any families of liberal faith in neighboring towns where there are no liberal societies?
6. Have you organized your society on the plan recommended by the Conference?

This looks to the disciplining of the forces *now in the field*, to an orderly arrangement for co-operative Christian labor.

We need organizing, — a common plan for our common aim, and the confidence which it gives of mutual dependence and support. Thrill the body with this spirit, letting it see distinctly that which it is called to accomplish, — 1. In parish relations; 2. Then in local neighborhood toil. Discipline the lay element of the body in these familiar spheres, and you will fit them for an advance upon the outworks and strongholds of error, bigotry, and crime in the world.

As a Conference, we find ample work in this direction still, and receive from it a quickening of religious zeal, growth of Christian confidence and harmony in our co-operative toil, with a joy from intercourse and communion heretofore unknown among us.

More than one-half of the societies in the Conference are organized, and some stirring actively in the toil, — making our proportion of the sum needed for the general missionary work of the body easier in its attainment, more certain as a fact.

In the two years of our organized existence, our contributions to the American Unitarian Association, and to other objects religious, benevolent, and educational, have much more than doubled.

While we accept and follow the common work of the other Local Conferences, this report touches the feature that has been at the basis of our toil from the beginning.

The Committee have thus endeavored to comply with the instructions that were given them, and respectfully submit this Report to the Secretaries of Local Conferences, and through them to the National Conference and to the churches.

WM. G. SCANDLIN,
WM. H. FISH,
CHARLES LOWE,
Committee.

MISSION OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION TO THE SEAMEN.

REPORT OF REV. D. W. STEVENS.

TISBURY, April 22, 1869.

To the Committee of the American Unitarian Association, on the New-England States.

GENTLEMEN, — A year ago to-day you were pleased to make an appropriation of five hundred dollars towards my salary, "for one year," as pastor of the "Church of the Unity of Tisbury;" "the same to be considered in part as aid to the society, but in consideration also of missionary service to be performed" by me, "on Martha's Vineyard, and among the shipping in the harbor of Holmes's Hole."

I hereby present an annual report of my work the past year.

As you are aware, I am the first distinctively Unitarian minister ever settled on Martha's Vineyard, though the Rev. Joseph Thaxter, formerly of Edgartown, was in reality a Unitarian. The newly organized society in this place labors under the usual disadvantages of new Unitarian societies organized in places where a large portion of the community are opposed to Liberal Christianity. The society here is in a hopeful and prosperous condition, all things considered. Prejudice against it has softened very much the past year. Should the bond of union remain unbroken in the Unitarian society here, it will eventually grow into a full organism, with a self-sustaining power sufficient to exert a liberalizing and salutary influence over all the Vineyard.

Since my connection with the society, I have preached two sermons a Sunday, besides teaching a Bible-class, and performing the usual duties of a settled clergyman. For the benefit of the Sunday school, there was a very successful pic-nic, last summer, in a pleasant grove near the camp-ground, notwithstanding our school was not invited to attend what was called an "evangelical union pic-nic," comprising all the Sunday schools on the island, except the Unitarian. Through the kindness of the Secretary of the Sunday-school Society, over one hundred

and sixty volumes of second-hand books, some of which are nearly new, have been added to the library of our Sunday school, free of expense. We have had some teachers' meetings. The school as well as the society is small, as is usually the case with new societies, though our congregations sometimes number more than a hundred.

The first Sunday I came to the island to preach, I wrote a circular containing, in brief, some of the leading religious opinions of Unitarians, and the society had a thousand copies printed for gratuitous distribution in behalf of Liberal Christianity. They accomplished a good work. Several months ago I delivered in a public hall here, a lecture on Unitarianism, which was well attended. Recently, I have commenced a course of doctrinal sermons to be delivered every Sunday evening in our church, until the close of the course. There are several earnest workers in our society who render very valuable assistance in promoting religious freedom.

Soon after the publication of the circulars to Liberal Christians, I had printed at my own expense two thousand copies of invitations to seamen in the harbor near here, to attend public worship in the Church of the Unity. They responded cordially to the invitation; but owing to the fact that no provision was made for visiting seamen in the harbor, except what I made at my own personal expense from time to time, in borrowing boats, and hiring persons to conduct them in the harbor among the vessels, the burden grew too heavy to be borne by one whose salary is only a thousand dollars a year, and where family supplies are more expensive than in the city of Boston. Consequently, this very important part of my mission has been very much neglected the past year. Recently, the want has been partially supplied by a very pleasant incident. Unsolicited and unexpectedly, I received a generous donation from the Sunday school to which I belonged, more than a quarter of a century ago, in my native town of Marlborough. With this donation I purchased a mission-boat for visiting sailors in the harbor, and carrying to them Bibles, tracts, and other publications useful to seamen. In addition to this small boat, suitable only for use in mild weather, a large sail-boat is needed for rough

weather, which would incur an expense of several hundred dollars, besides requiring an experienced boatman to manage it.

To be interested, seamen must be met on their own ground. To be drawn to public worship, they must be invited from Sunday to Sunday. Very many have the impression that they are not wanted where other people worship God. Consequently, thousands, every year, remain on board their vessels in this harbor on Sundays, without going to any place of public worship. The grand opportunity for doing good in this direction may be inferred from the statement made to me by the reporter of the Boston Associated Press, for the past year, who said that from his records it appeared that about twenty-five vessels anchored daily in the harbor the past year. Allowing six persons to a vessel, the number of seamen in the harbor during the year was more than *fifty-four thousand.*

Many of these coasting sailors are men of good education, and they are blessed with practical common sense. They have seen enough of the world to be ready to receive rational views of Christianity. In point of fact, pietism has no abiding-place in their hearts. They respond to practical Christianity with a warmth of devotion that gives new life and value to the teachings of Him who went about doing good, as the author of Christianity. The character usually given to sailors is a most unjust and indiscriminating one. The generosity of their hearts is more than equal to that of many other classes of mankind. Some sailors are low and degraded, so are some who pretend to be very pious.

Recognizing the fact of the general intelligence of the seamen entering this harbor, I began to consider the best means for gratifying this intelligence and promoting its growth. Accordingly, the idea of establishing a Sailors' Free Reading-room and Library, at some convenient place, was conceived. For this purpose, in June last, a small lot of land, with an old, dilapidated, filthy building deserted by both man and beast, was secured on the west bank of the harbor, nearly a mile from the village, towards the light-house, on the West Chop. With small means of my own, I commenced operations of purification, and continued until I was obliged to call for pecuniary

assistance. I made my condition and wants known to the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, from whom I have received many kind favors. He gave me to understand that the Association could not do any more for my mission at that time; and that I should have to solicit aid personally, in order to carry out my plans, which he approved. The idea of begging, even for a benevolent purpose, was most sickening to my feelings, which are hardly convalescent now. It was new business for me. However, I began to move in one of the best places in the world for benevolent enterprises, the good old city of Boston. I remember well the first benefactor to the cause under notice. I have his name on paper, and his words of good cheer in my heart. The latter will remain a secret for ever; the former, with other names of generous donors, I intend to present to the public at some future time, as friends of our much neglected seamen.

Omitting to mention many incidents, pleasant and painful, encouraging and discouraging, such as usually belong to all operations requiring the aid of Mammon for support, we will recross Buzzard's Bay and the Vineyard Sound to the Vineyard itself, and see what progress has been made on the Reading-room.

On the Fourth of July last, a flagstaff, about sixty feet long, was raised by the aid of sailors, on the north end of the building we are about to look into; and a United-States flag was hoisted. Within, the "Christian Register," the "Boston Daily Advertiser," and a few other newspapers, were placed on file. Ever since that time, the Sailors' Free Reading-room, at Holmes's Hole, has been open to the public. On the twenty-seventh day of the following month, there was a public dedication of the building, to which all the benefactors of the institution were invited, unless some were omitted by mistake. A full account of the dedication appeared in the "Monthly Journal." The Secretary of the American Unitarian Association was present, and also one minister from Boston, the Rev. Dr. Gannett, to whom I feel a far greater indebtedness than I can possibly express, not only for the personal sacrifice he made in coming to the island, but also for the many valuable favors he has conferred on me since the dedication.

We must pass from that time to the present without note or comment, and inquire how the Reading-room looks to-day. The house is almost precisely in the same condition now that it was at the time of dedication, — unoccupied by any family, — making it necessary for me to walk four miles a day to open and close the house. But there has been a large increase of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, charts, and other documents useful to sailors. Through the kindness of Professor Benjamin Peirce, of Harvard University, more than forty excellent charts of the Coast Survey have been placed in the building. Lists of beacons, buoys, light-houses, floating lights, &c., on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf Coasts of the United States, have been furnished by Commodore Blake. To these conveniences a standard mercurial barometer has been added.

The library contains about two hundred and fifty bound books, besides several hundred pamphlets, some of which are for gratuitous distribution. The Reading-room is supplied regularly with twenty-five different newspapers, including dailies, semi-weeklies, and weeklies, giving all the marine news from St. John, N.B., to Baltimore, Md., besides representing the religious views of eight Christian sects. The Room is also supplied with several monthly magazines. All the conveniences for writing letters, including stationery, are kept in the desk; and a United-States mail-box is confined to the outside door, from which letters are carried daily to the post-office. About one hundred and seventeen feet of a new and commodious boat-wharf, in front of the building, is finished. A grant from the legislature has recently been obtained to extend the wharf five hundred feet. When completed, it will be by far the best wharf of the kind on the Vineyard. It may be known dark evenings, by a red light. The expense of extending this wharf to a depth of water sufficient to secure the full confidence of seamen landing at all seasons of the year, and in all states of the tides, will be much greater than any thus far incurred in any operation connected with the establishment. The amount has been estimated as high as two and as low as one thousand dollars. The actual cost will depend very much upon the nature of the ground over which the wharf will be extended.

The necessary means are not yet secured for the imperative work in order to make the institution above and independent of all adverse influences.

The erection on the premises of a Bethel, an amusement-room, and a workshop larger than the present one, would be productive of much good to mariners, besides bringing the institution far nearer completion.

The enterprise has been carried on mainly under the auspices and by the benefactions of Liberal Christians, which will be noticed more fully in a future report, after contingent and promised donations have been received, and the absolutely necessary work, already begun, has been finished. For the expense of the whole enterprise of establishing the institution, I am personally responsible, with no other bond of security except the generosity of noble hearts, such as have thus far most graciously responded to my calls for aid without subjecting my mission to a menial beggary. I have received presents all the way from one book and a few cents up to twenty-five volumes and three hundred dollars, from the Channing Conference, which has recently voted three hundred more,— the largest donation from any one source. Should I attempt to express my gratitude for the early and timely aid of the Conference, my language would appear extravagant. The same would be true in relation to the munificence of some private friends of the institution, who have placed a perpetual seal on my lips, both as to their names and the amount given.

By saying that the enterprise has been sustained by Liberal Christians, is by no means equivalent to saying that the institution is sectarian: far from it. As has been said, eight religious sects are already represented in the establishment by their respective religious publications, regularly received. The whole concern will be conducted on the broadest principles of humanity, under the providence of God.

Besides work for the Church of the Unity here, and work on behalf of seamen, the past year, I have done something for popular education and the general intelligence of the people of the town. I have not only attended educational meetings and taken part in several discussions on topics pertaining to

common schools, but I also delivered the "associational" address at the last meeting of the "Dukes-County Educational Association;" and I have recently closed a course of seven lectures on literary and scientific subjects, in a public hall in the village.

All the foregoing labor has been performed without any regularly hired help, either in-doors or out, and without the use of either horse or carriage, only when dire necessity compelled an occasional hiring. I have had no time to go either a hunting or a fishing, or even to dig for the petrified bones of extinct monsters on Gay Head. And rather than write any more now about myself, I shall close this partial and imperfect report; and, for further information, I would extend a cordial invitation to all the friends of my mission, those named and to be named, to "come and see."

Respectfully submitted,

DANIEL W. STEVENS.

THE WORK IN WILMINGTON, N.C.

[It will be understood, that the work in Wilmington has been so enlarged, partly by the increased support of the Soldiers' Memorial Society and our Association, and partly by the aid received in Wilmington and from the Peabody Fund, that, instead of having Miss Bradley alone, as at first, there are now two schools, with three teachers in each; and Miss Bradley gives her whole time to the general superintendence of these, and to the Sunday school which she has organized, and which she has made exceedingly efficient.

We have received reports from five of the teachers under Miss Bradley, one of which is given below.

We are also glad to be able to print an extract from a letter received from Miss L. Crocker and Mrs. E. D. Cheney, who, as officers of the New-England Freedmen's Aid Society, have made a tour through the Southern States, visiting schools; and who, at our request, went out of their way to examine and report upon Miss Bradley's schools.]

Extract from Letter of Miss L. Crocker.

GOLDSBORO', N.C., May 13, 1869.

MY DEAR MR. LOWE, — While we wait here five or six hours for the train to Newbern, I will write you a brief report of our

day at Wilmington. Miss Bradley does not feel that we had time enough to see her work, and we should have been glad to stay longer. We are quite sure, however, that our recent experience enables us to judge fairly of the merits of a school by a few hours' observation.

We were disappointed that we could not reach Wilmington in season to see Miss Bradley's Sunday classes, because we believe her missionary work a peculiar feature; still, one needs but to see and talk with her to realize the inspiration of her teaching, and to believe that a truly religious spirit pervades her whole life, and flows out to all who come under her influence. We visited first the Union School, established by her when she went to Wilmington, and where, till this year, she has labored every day, and been the principal teacher. There we saw abundant evidence of her moral influence and intellectual ability. She has governed by gaining the love and co-operation of her pupils, and presented us with one hundred and fifty-six living arguments of good discipline without whipping. Perfectly wild and ungoverned children when she took them, they seem to love to do right now for its own sake and Miss Bradley's, without coercion. One must look upon this school to understand what this statement implies. The children did not bring healthy minds in healthy bodies to be moulded and developed by her loving spirit. They are even now a pitiful-looking set, — many of evidently low organization, and poorly fed and cared for.

We are glad to tell you that the school is fully up to the times in its class methods, and that the intellectual results of two years' work are as satisfactory as you could desire. This opinion is based upon a mere glimpse, but I have no hesitation in giving it.

We saw also the Hemmenway School, recently established, and which has had Miss Bradley's superintendence only. It has not been organized long enough yet for its teachers to have the power over it that is apparent in the other school; but Miss Bradley is well pleased with the progress made, and feels that its principal is working with her to make it as thoroughly a missionary field as the Union School has become.

The new school-house is convenient and well arranged; and Miss Bradley is justly proud of it, — built and paid for by her own exertions.

Report of the Teacher of the Second Division Union Grammar School.

My division numbers fifty-five, and the absent marks are very few. These I have found, after calling at their homes, are obliged to stay away, either from sickness in the family, or from some necessity. Thus, they show themselves earnest and enthusiastic about school.

I have visited thirty-seven families, some of them sending two or more children to our school. I hear from every side, not only from the poor classes, but from the educated people of Wilmington, of the good Miss Bradley has accomplished here. She has gone among them, telling them how to keep their houses and children neat, and has given them some ideas of living, which they never had before. I find very little real want among them; and it is a fact, that since Miss Bradley came here, they have been more industrious, and each year have needed less from others. There is but one case in which I have given an article of clothing. That shows an amount of enterprise which these people have never shown until Miss Bradley came among them. There is no profanity heard about the school-house, and I have *never* heard a boy swear since I have been here. Now, the work is to carry on what she has begun here. There is much, much to be done; and I hope the philanthropic people at the North will lend their aid in continuing so necessary a work.

One can but feel that this mass of little people are one day to make a lasting impression upon the South. Their influence is to be felt through all the future, and the North are to decide what that influence shall be.

One day, when the Boston desks were being fitted into our school-room (which are the wonder of all the people here), we visited the Hemmenway School at the other side of the city. The school numbered one-hundred and forty-five, and is in charge of Miss M. A. Howe, with two assistants. The school-

house is remarkably light and cheerful, being entirely new, and the scholars are of a higher grade; that is, a trifle higher class than ours. Some of the scholars have been in pay schools; and, although they have not been under a good drill in those schools, still it gives something to start upon this year, and makes the new school take a place with the old. My regard for Miss Bradley increased when I looked over that airy schoolhouse, which she had built by her own exertions, and the much good it had done already; and I knew those happy little faces repaid her every time she looked at them.

Our schools have reached a degree of notoriety, so that people are taking their children from pay schools, and entering them in ours. We have had a good deal of company in school, of gentlemen who are interested in the work, and we have received much encouragement from them.

We have a sabbath school on Sunday afternoons, which Miss Bradley presides over, and which draws in a large number of men, old and young, as well as children. I have been particularly struck by the attention which they gave to her explanations of the Bible, and cannot but feel that ideas are being planted which will some time blossom into fruit. I have a class of small children, the same who attend our day school; and I find my class in Sunday school a very happy feature in my work here.

There have been in the Union Grammar School two hundred and ten different scholars since November.

COLORED SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF J. R. FLETCHER.

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26, 1869.

DEAR SIR, — Believing you will be pleased to know of the steady progress of the good work here, I will endeavor very briefly to inform you of the branch under my own immediate supervision. In the Massachusetts (night) school for colored

adults the interest is steadily increasing, with the members of the class under my own immediate charge.

They are making good progress in the power of fixing the attention, the very foundation, in my judgment, of all intellectual culture, discipline, and power. This is an acquisition in which all pupils in the schools here, both white and colored, are very deficient. It is a slow and tedious process, but one that is particularly important just now with these people, in the first flush of liberty and ardent thirst for knowledge, and when there are so many things to be taught. My efforts at present are directed to the work of laying a foundation to build upon, by giving them a thorough and rigid drill in the elementary principles of language, elocution, and mathematics and geography, improving the opportunity, as it offers, for moral and spiritual culture, taking special care to develop the reasoning faculties. I have in the class two or three young men of more than ordinary natural ability, and who, if opportunity offers, are destined to exert a wide influence for good. Mr. ———, of whom you have several times spoken to me, is one of them. He brought me a letter of introduction from Miss Smith, Sumpter, S.C.

I am forming a class of this material in our union sabbath school (white), which meets in the City Hall on Sunday morning, for an hour and a half, under my own charge; and among them is one who is a member of my class in the night school, and a teacher Sunday afternoon in a Baptist sabbath school.

Yesterday, two of this class began in my colored sabbath school in the afternoon, the work of the teacher, very successfully.

Suitable books for a library for a part of both these schools are very much needed. If you thought it advisable, and that an appeal to our people, through the "Christian Register," for books, where schools are making new purchases for the spring, and have those which have been read by their scholars, so that they might like to help us, would be available, I would make the attempt.

I cannot conceive of a place where they would do more good than in this school, where we have one hundred and thirty

scholars, old and young; and these classes as keen and active as any I ever met, and with faithful, earnest teachers, and in the very midst of those who deny to us the Christian name. Please give your advice on this subject.

We hope, by God's blessing on our humble labors, ere long to prepare the way for the use of a free library of books of larger size and deeper thought; for this intense eagerness for books must be turned to account. These people are quite unlike our laboring community at the North (I mean, of course, the unlettered). One good reader can hold a little audience in the closest attention.

Very truly yours, in Christian friendship,

JOSIAH R. FLETCHER.

Rev. C. LOWE, Secretary A.U.A.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY REV. EDWARD E. HALE.

THE service of the Lord's Supper is simpler and more natural to Liberal Christians and Liberal churches than it can be to any others.

We look at the service from a position so different from that of other Christians, that a great deal in their books of devotion regarding it does not meet our purposes; and almost all which is said in their instructions to the young regarding it, is foreign to our system of religious education.

For the same reason, it will prove, I think, that as liberty of conscience gains its true place in Christian faith, the Lord's Supper will unite more and more participants; and that they will take a more real satisfaction in a service which is in itself the most simple and natural.

In proportion as the Christian world abandons the effort to state in words ideas which transcend words; in proportion as Christian men, who have different gifts and different duties, abandon the effort to make one statement of an average Christianity which shall satisfy all; in proportion as races of differ-

ent temperament and education are willing to admit that they differ, and as they shall seek unity of spirit in diversity of creed and ritual rather than in a galling uniformity; in proportion, that is to say, as the Christian Church becomes more liberal in its verbal statements of doctrine, — it will also become more attached to those visible symbols of its common faith, hope, and love, which do not require the machinery of words. This is just as we have seen in our armies, officers and men uniting to the death in allegiance to the flag, who could not unite in any verbal explanations of the requisitions of the Constitution.

In proportion, again, as the claims of a special hierarchy of preachers or priests, to be considered "the light of the world," or "the salt of the world," in virtue of some preternatural ordination, fade out of memory; in proportion as the whole body of Christians — saints and sinners, well and sick, weak and strong — understand that all who have been born into the church have duties in the church intrusted to them, — in that proportion will a visible symbol or service of communion, uniting all in the same office, gain new hold and more influence among Christian men.

In proportion, again, as the church abates in its desire to unite that communion service with a statement of theology, or a profession of sanctity; in proportion as it invites, to its services of communion, people who are as weak as Peter was, and as faithless as Thomas was, — will a share in this service of communion become more and more a natural part of the religious training of men's lives.

Other sections of the church may deal as they can with the difficulties with which they have surrounded the communion-table. Let the Church of Rome settle for its communicants as it can the distinction drawn there between priest and layman; let the churches which have scholastic creeds settle as they can the distinctions to be drawn between persons who can understand those creeds and those who cannot; let the churches which divide the world between the saints who have had a specified religious experience, and all other unconscious men, make such provisions as they can for maintaining a service of communion among a

separated fraction of Christ's brethren and sisters: the other churches, which have no written creeds, and which believe that all men born into the church should be, according to their power, Christian ministers, will always enter with special ease upon the communion service, and will, most naturally, feel that it is a service particularly their own.

In the midst of the infinite variety of religious meditations, services, and duties, there comes in, from time to time, this special service, devoted to Jesus Christ, the centre of the Christian system, — the centre, according to Christian philosophy, of all history, — and the source of all that is peculiar in our modern life. Whatever question preacher or worshipper may have on any other occasion as to the fit theme for meditation, prayer, or resolve, there is no such question here. This service takes care of itself, suggests its own topics, and, as to methods of administration. admits of as much diversity as exists in the hospitalities or in the conversation of any gathering together of friends. All other religious services must be tinged with that peculiar sentiment of awe or amazement which attends of necessity the communion between limited beings and an infinite God, when, in the restricted language of the earth, men speak of the realities of heaven to the God of heaven. But the communion service, so far as it is a service of commemoration, recalls the memory of events which passed on this earth in the machinery of human lives. It recalls words which were spoken in human language, and understood by the men who heard them. It is, therefore, the most simple of religious services. It is to be approached with the same readiness with which men approach the service of prayer, of reading the Scripture, or the conscientious discharge of any other religious duty. It is a service simple in itself, — one which calls more naturally on men's hearts, and is more in accordance, indeed, with their daily habit in other things which are dear to them, than is any other of their special religious duties.

It may be granted, that, if Jesus Christ had only brought a code of laws into the world, the people who accepted that code might have obeyed it, and carried out its directions of ritual, without a special service in his memory and honor, as the Jews

fulfilled the law of Moses without any special tribute dedicated to him. But as the Son of God brings the world more than law, as he brings it a New Life, which, in every necessity of society, uplifts, purifies, and increases the life which it finds in the world, a special service consecrated to his life is a characteristic service, — a service necessary for the completion of any Christian ritual. To reproduce his life in all its energy and in all its tenderness is the perpetual office of the church. It would fall short of that office if it simply studied his words, or worshipped his Father, or carried out the charities between man and man which he enjoins. The New Life, and "abundance of it," make on all men who pray for a future better than to-day a requisition for some form of religious observance which shall be quite independent of services of worship, of resolution, or of philanthropy. And this is only to say in abstract words, and therefore coldly, what he said personally, and therefore tenderly. He was going away; but he could not bear that they should forget him. It was not enough that they should obey him, not enough that they should take his name. They had loved him, and he begged them to love him still; and, though he left them for higher service, he begged them to remember their best friend after he had gone.

In proportion as the service of communion is devoted thus to its own office, — namely, the memory of our Lord, and the reproduction of his life in ours; in proportion as it is separated from questions of doctrines, of casuistry in practice, from the searchings of hearts anxious lest they have failed before God, — does it become again what the first fathers found it, and what we must suppose our Saviour hoped it might be. At an annual Thanksgiving feast, he asked those from whom he was parting, not to forget him, but by a special memorial symbol, from time to time, to remember him. There is no gathering together of friends, who meet in a serious spirit, where this symbol is not perfectly in place. More easy is the right renewal of the service than it is to found any other service of the church; and therefore I shall always beg my young friends, who, in our modern emigrations, find themselves planted in some wilderness just opened to human life, to continue this

service, though they be debarred all other public offices of religion. They may not have a church; there may be no one willing to preach; there may be no one who feels competent to offer the prayers of an assembly: but even in such a wilderdess, though there should be only the two or three together which constitute a church, they may yet break bread in memory of him who asked them so to remember him.

When I have said this to any friend, I have not been surprised if he was frank enough to reply, that he had no such real sense of Christ's existence, far less of his character, purposes, method of work, and influence, as I supposed; that such an idea as mine was rather ministerial and scholastic, and that it did not enter into the range of his own motives of life. I say, I have not been surprised at any such acknowledgment. I think most religious books which have been written have tended to make Jesus Christ the most unreal being in history; and therefore I cannot be surprised that to many men, perhaps to the majority of men, in most communities, his life and work in this world are far less matters of real and adequate belief than the life of any other character in history. I believe there are multitudes of well-meaning men and women who hear the verbal appeal made to them, to "come to Jesus," in dumb amazement, without the slightest conception of what is intended. But to any one who is frank enough to acknowledge to me that his Saviour is not a real person to him, I have only to reply, that I do not know why he should expect to have a vivid idea of the Saviour's personality and real being. If he do not make it a special subject of thought; if he do not attempt to bring it into memory, to set it in the light of to-day, so that he may know what the Saviour would say if he were in Boston; if a man do not attempt to go back to look at his Saviour in the light of Galilee and Judæa, so that he may know what he would himself have said or done if he had heard the Sermon on the Mount, or had witnessed the Crucifixion; if a man has not attempted to remember his Saviour, and to make his life real, — he cannot wonder that that life is not real to him; that it is only a dream or abstraction. If he do make that effort, if he do accustom himself to call his Saviour

as a personal guide into his daily duty, why, he joins in the communion of the church, — but sometimes he prefers to do it in his closet, instead of uniting in the service, hallowed by the memories of centuries, which the Saviour himself suggested, when, in the upper room, they met together for the last time.

And, indeed, I am meeting, in every day of my life, excellent Christians, who will not, or do not, take those inexpressible blessings of a Christian life which they might have, if they would only close their hands upon them. I meet people who deny themselves most gallantly; who work for the world at large, steadily, and of course; who love their meanest brothers and sisters with more demonstration, and, as I think, with much more intensity, than they love themselves: of such people, I know they "have been with Jesus," because they bear exactly the test that he proposed; namely, because they love each other. I know that they are Christians of a very high type, very near his heart, and very strong in the strength he left the world. But they, because of some tangle which nobody can explain for them, and which they will not cut, are always trying to persuade themselves that they do not belong to his church, must not use its privileges, must not seek the strength of mutual sympathy which springs, of course, from its communion. None the less are they members of his church; none the less do they give it strength, and receive strength from it. If only they could receive, at the same time, comfort, hope, and joy.

Young people ask me when they shall make their first communion. I only know that this time may be so postponed that they shall lose much pleasure, much comfort, much strength. I know no Procrustean rule for it. Just when active life opens on us; when one finds himself his own master for the first time; when he has to do what he thinks right, and can no longer ask his father and mother what they think, — just at that turning-point of life is, very naturally and happily, the moment when most persons first partake of the communion. That is the triumph moment of life, if only they gain infinite strength for it, and it seems to me the ripe moment for this service. This service helps them, that, as they enter on life, it may not

be life unguided; that, in the first discovery of their own weakness, they may know the wonders of divine strength; and that, in any moment of loneliness, they may know how great a blessing we have, in our union as one church, of so many children of God.

LIBERAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

We give below the correspondence which has been had with the leaders of the Liberal Christian Union in Switzerland. We hope at some time to present a sketch of this movement, so far as we have been able to understand it, through the various documents connected with it which have been sent to us. Want of space prevents our doing more at this time than to mention that the ideas which are at the bottom of it, appear to meet with a welcome all though the Protestant cantons, wherever they have been preached. The eagerness of their reception indeed is very remarkable, and that not alone among the class whom we characterize as the unchurched, but even more, perhaps, among those actively connected with the evangelical churches. One hundred and fifty of these churches are said to be more or less fully in sympathy with them.

(Translation.)

Neuchatel, Switzerland, March 26, 1869.

Sir, — We have for a long time been seeking the means of putting ourselves in communication with the Unitarian Christians of America. We have now learned, through the Review published in Paris by Pastor Martin Paschoud, the way of doing this; and we hasten to take advantage of it by sending to you the assurance of our sympathy and regard, and of our desire to secure, so far as may be possible, an exchange of fraternal relations.

Switzerland, the warm hearthstone of Protestantism, is at this moment agitated, and we believe in a wholesome way, by a great reform movement which enlarges itself every day and which promises to be enduring. This movement has more than one point of resemblance to that of the Unitarians, though it is perhaps more radical, and may incline more to the extreme consequences of Christian liberalism. You can judge of that by the journal and the pamphlets which we send you, especially by the "Manifeste du Christianisme Libéral." But whatever may be the differences of opinion, or rather the differences in degree, which may exist between you and us, we shall be happy to be kept informed of your labors and your progress, and of the general movement of your church.

We have among us a man with whose name you are surely familiar, Professor Edward Desor, who was one of the most sincere friends and admirers of your illustrious and revered Parker. Perhaps, indeed, some of you may have known him personally during his residence in the United States.

We shall be glad to receive from you as frequent and full communications as possible, whether by letter or by the regular sending of journals, as, for example, the "Monthly Journal;" or by the sending of the works of your principal writers since Channing and Parker.

For Christians, and for liberal Christians above all, there is no longer a distinction of race or of communion; all those who have preceded us in advocating bravely the holy cause of freedom united to religion, with whatever measure of completeness they may have done it, have a right to the grateful homage of those who follow them in their course. May all the friends of the liberal gospel and of progressive Protestantism now join hands across all barriers, in order to proclaim to the world no longer the Christ, with closed arms, whom the younger generations shun; no longer the mystic and legendary Christ, in his byzantine halo; but the great and holy Man who has been the leader and guide of humanity in the difficult ways of justice, of self-denial, of devotion, and of martyrdom!

With these sentiments of solidarity, and of broad Christian brotherhood, we beg you, sir, to communicate to the Unitarian

Churches of America the expression of our cordial and respectful sympathy.

In the name of the Committee of the reformed society, "L'Union du Christianisme Libéral."

FERDINAND BUISSON, *Secretary.*

(Reply.)

M. BUISSON.

ROOMS OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION, May 11, 1869.

MY DEAR SIR, — It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge your communication of March 26. I have laid it before the Executive Committee of our Association, and they desire me to express to you their cordial sympathy and greeting, and to assure you of their earnest desire to form closer relations with you.

It seemed to us fitting that such words as yours should come to us from Switzerland, the land of Tell and Zwingli and Servetus, — the land ever associated in our minds with the spirit of liberty. This new movement which you have inaugurated seems to us wholly in harmony with those great historic movements in the interests of freedom which have found their birthplace on that same soil.

I have read very carefully and with great interest the documents which you sent to me, endeavoring fully to understand your position.

You say that possibly you are more radical than we. From what I gather in reading your pamphlets, I am led to believe that in one sense this is so. That is to say, in matters of opinion in regard to the nature and office of Christ, while there are men in our fellowship who go farther than you in their rejection of the commonly accepted doctrines, the Unitarians of America, as a body, hold to much which you appear to deny. But if I judge your position rightly, your fundamental principle is, that in the true Christian Church doctrines and every thing else must be held subordinate to the endeavor after the highest life, the life of God in the soul; and it is on the importance of this last that your great emphasis is laid. It seems to me that this principle, if truly adhered to, will ensure you the sympathy and allegiance of all liberal Christians; and I am not surprised that you expect to attract persons of thoroughly evangelical opinions as well as those of the opposite.

It has been neglect of this great principle that has occasioned most of the want of harmony between the radicals and conservatives among us; and this neglect has been with the former quite as much as with the latter. For if the conservatives have been led to urge with too much stress the necessity of believing certain doctrines, the radicals have urged with equal stress and prominence the necessity of uprooting and disbelieving them. In opposite directions, therefore, both alike have assumed the essential importance of correct opinions; and if the conservatives have spent their strength too much in affirmation of views with which the intellect alone is concerned, the radicals have spent theirs too much in speculative denials. It is pleasant to think of what may yet be, if both alike will consider only (just as you propose to do) how we may best fulfil the law of Christ, as centred in his two great commandments that we shall love God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves, and if we will use all the helps to this fulfilment which God has vouchsafed, and thrust aside every thing that hinders.

May you be enabled to keep this purpose supreme, and then you will more effectually press your demand upon the Christian world, that no particular form of belief shall be made a barrier to fellowship or assumed as a condition of salvation.

We shall watch your progress with exceeding interest: we shall especially look to see how you shall succeed in proving that, in religion, liberty and union may coexist; and we shall be strengthened by your success.

I send to you, on behalf of our Association, a box containing all its publications; and I have put in it a small package containing certain pamphlets, from which you may most speedily obtain information in regard to the recent action of our body and its present position. We shall be gratified to receive from you whatever you may publish from time to time: we shall invite our brethren who may visit Europe, if possible, to meet you and to cultivate personal relations and acquaintance.

Fully reciprocating your expressions of brotherly sympathy and regard, I am, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association,

Sincerely yours, CHARLES LOWE, *Secretary*.

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

[This letter was submitted in connection with the Report of the Executive Committee at the Public Meeting of the Association. But, for convenience' sake, it is printed here rather than in the Report of the proceedings of that meeting.]

British and Foreign Unitarian Rooms,
178 Strand, London, 5 May, 1869.

My dear Mr. Lowe, — I do most cheerfully respond to your request to put down a few words which may bind us still more and more together in this great and holy work of spreading the truths of the Christian religion in all their ancient simplicity and power. We rejoice to hear of the zeal, energy, and generosity among your churches, and assure you the story of your recent efforts and successes has done something to awaken a greater interest in England for the promotion of Unitarianism; and with the visit and stirring addresses of Dr. Bellows we begin to feel something like a new life among us.

During the last twelve months more money has been subscribed to our funds, and more grants of money have been made for missionary purposes, and more missionaries engaged, and more of our books and tracts (nearly fifty thousand) sent out among our various associations and churches, than in any past similar period. I made a rough estimate a few days ago that about £40,000 have been spent this year by a few of our congregations in the erection of new chapels or rebuilding old ones. And the missionary work seems quickening into life in different parts of our country. In the north of England there are several missionary ministers now engaged, and in Scotland we propose adding a third to the two already there. We experience the same difficulty that you do to find able, earnest, and devout ministers for this work. In London we have during the last three years enlisted the occasional services of our laymen, who have opened out seven new preaching places, in which they conduct thirteen services every Sunday, and aid our cause beyond all estimate by this voluntary preaching of

the gospel, and showing that they appreciate their views and can make some sacrifice to promote them. I send you by this mail a copy of a large placard which has done us some service, and helped to open the eyes of many to principles they have been taught to regard as unscriptural and irreligious.

Indeed we find, in many places, we are not so much needed to persuade the people to adopt our Unitarian views, as to encourage them to make an open profession of their own, which are identical with our doctrines. The direct results of our labors in England, on the churches and the masses of the people, I fear is only small; whereas the indirect influence we feel we are exercising by associated effort, and the simple and clear testimony we are bearing to a religion in unison with the plain teachings of Christ and all the best impulses of our nature, is very great. We can certainly trace in the agitation going on in the Church of England, for a more scriptural and rational theology, by leaders such as Bishop Colenso, Stanley, Maurice, and others, the authorship to the Unitarian Church. It may not be known among you generally that Colenso ascribes much of his more rational doctrines to Maurice, and that Maurice is the son of a Unitarian minister. At present the Unitarian seed is broadcast, and we must still labor on and wait for the harvest. The position we are beginning to occupy is that of a city on a hill, though still there are too many among us who would have us to keep in the background and hide our light under a bushel. You have risen from this position, and we are rising.

You will be glad to hear that the ministers of our churches, who have not hitherto been members of the Unitarian Association, are now joining in greater numbers, and we are finding greater sympathy almost everywhere for distinct missionary work than before. We are also happy to state, that our Irish brethren are yielding gracefully to the extinction of government grants (the *Regium Donum*) for dissenting churches in Ireland. A movement is now on foot among us to have Unitarian worship at all our watering-places; for we must all feel that no views of the divine government can possibly be more consoling to the invalids who frequent those places, than those

so dear to us at all times. It does appear to many of us that our churches are beginning to realize they have a great and solemn work to do, and that the last command of our Master, to go out into all the world and tell the good news to all the people, is now felt as addressed to us Unitarians. All the earnest workers on this side of the Atlantic do most heartily bless you in your labors, and assure you that the liberal gifts to your Associations, and the work you are now carrying on, cheers and strengthens them in the midst of their labors. Happy as we are that the Unitarian name is so distinctly avowed among you, we are still more pleased and thankful to God that you retain the distinctively Christian character of your work. I can truly say we are perfectly one with you in your recent trials and triumphs.

Very sincerely and faithfully yours.

ROBERT SPEARS.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

No Sects in Heaven, and other Poems. By Mrs. E. H. J. CLEAVELAND. New York: Clark & Maynard, Woolworth & Co.

It is a pleasant sign of the times, that the sentiment indicated in this title should be so eagerly welcomed as to give such popularity to the poem developing it, that the publishers declare that more than one hundred thousand copies have been sold in England; and it is none the less pleasant to notice that the author is evidently in the so-called evangelical ranks. We ascribe its alleged popularity to its sentiment, because, as a poem it has not sufficient merit to command this acceptance. — ED.

Black Forest. Village Stories. By BERTHOLD AUERBACH. Translated by CHARLES GOEPP. New York: Leypoldt & Holt. For sale in Boston by E. P. Dutton & Co.

These stories have the same charm which attaches to other of Auerbach's writings, without the drawback of excessive length. They are graphic and entertaining pictures of German village life. — ED.

INTELLIGENCE.

The Chicago Conference held a meeting at Unity Church, Chicago, Ill., on Wednesday, April 21. There were the usual reports from the churches connected with the organization, and essays were read by R. N. Foster, M D., of Chicago, on "The value and influence of the Bible;" and by Artemas Carter, Esq., of Winnetka, Ill., President of the Conference, on "A layman's view of a minister's duty;" which essays were followed by discussions. There was also an address from Rev. Carlton A. Staples, Western Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, on "The duty of the isolated Unitarian to his faith."

The South Middlesex Conference held its quarterly meeting at the Church of the First Parish, Cambridge, Mass., on Thursday, April 22. Attention having been called to the proposed general collection for the Sunday-school Society, on the second Sunday in May, it was voted to recommend the churches of the Conference to respond to the appeal. The subject assigned for discussion was as follows: "The duty of aid and fellowship between the churches of this Conference. The duty of this meeting to devise measures to carry that object into effect." The discussion was introduced by an essay from Rev. Leonard J. Livermore, of North Cambridge; and before adjournment, a committee, consisting of three ladies and three gentlemen, was appointed, to take into further and more practical consideration the suggestions of the essay, and report at the next meeting.

The Worcester Conference held a meeting at Lancaster, Mass., commencing on Tuesday evening, April 27, and continuing through the following day. A sermon was preached by Rev. Edward H. Hall, of Worcester; and there was a discussion on "The value of the Christian ordinances, and the means of increasing interest in them," introduced by an essay from Rev. Henry F. Jenks, of Fitchburg. Rev. L. J. Livermore, Secretary of the Sunday-school Society, was present, and urged a generous response to the appeal of that organization for funds.

The Norfolk Conference held a meeting at South Framingham, Mass., on Wednesday, April 28, in the Baptist Church, kindly offered for that purpose, there being no Unitarian Church in the place. An essay was read by Rev. George F. Piper, of Canton, on

"Parish organization," which was followed by a discussion. It was voted to take up a collection in the churches of the Conference, for the Sunday-school Society, on the second Sunday in May.

The Plymouth and Bay Conference held its annual meeting in Duxbury, Mass., on Thursday, April 29. The question of "Missionary Work" was discussed, the opening remarks being made by Rev. Leonard J. Livermore, who was present as the representative of the American Unitarian Association and Sunday-school Society. It was voted that the Executive Committee should take into consideration the question of employing a secretary who could devote the whole of his time, if necessary, to missionary and other Christian work, within the limits of the Conference, and report at the next meeting. Officers for the coming year were chosen as follows: President, Hon. James H. Mitchell, East Bridgewater; Vice-Presidents, — Hon. Jacob H. Loud, Plymouth; and Rev. Calvin Lincoln, Hingham; Treasurer, Henry C. Harding, Hingham; Secretary, Rev. William H. Fish, South Scituate; Directors, — Rev. Francis C. Williams, East Bridgewater; Rev. John D. Wells, Quincy; Rev. Joseph H. Phipps, Kingston; Hon. Artemas Hale, Bridgewater; Lewis Bass, Quincy; Levi N. Bates, Cohasset.

The New-York and Hudson-River Conference held a meeting at the Church of the Messiah, in New York, commencing on Tuesday evening, May 4, with a sermon by Rev. George L. Chaney, of Boston, and continuing through the following day. The Secretary, Rev. Rushton D. Burr, of Yonkers, presented his report, and also read one from the Committee on Sunday-schools, both of which were discussed; and there were the usual reports from the societies belonging to the Conference. A resolution was passed, expressing respect for and sympathy with Rev. Samuel Osgood, D.D., who had recently resigned, after a ministry of twenty years, the pastorate of the Church of the Messiah; and another, authorizing the Directors to secure the services of a missionary to the seamen in the port of New York. A committee was appointed to present the subject of Sunday schools at the next meeting of the Conference. On Wednesday evening a public meeting was held in the Church of the Messiah, the subject being "A half century of Unitarianism in New York." Rev. Frederic A. Farley, D.D., presided, and addresses were made by Rev. Samuel Osgood, D.D., Rev. George L. Chaney, Rev. Richard Metcalf, Rev. Charles Lowe, Rev. Wil-

liam T. Clarke, Rev. Octavius B. Frothingham, and Hon. Richard Warren.

The Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa Conference held a meeting at Geneseo, Ill., commencing with a sermon by Rev. Frederic W. Holland (now preaching at Jacksonville, Ill.), on Tuesday evening, May 4, and continuing through the two following days. Sermons were also preached by Rev. Carlton A. Staples, Western Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, and Rev. W. S. Balch (Universalist), of Galesburg, Ill. An essay was read by Rev. Nathaniel Seaver, Jr., of Davenport, Iowa, on "Basis of religious union," which was followed by a discussion; and the subject of "The work and methods of a liberal church" was also discussed, being introduced by remarks from Rev. Timothy H. Eddowes, of Geneva, Ill.

The Corner-Stone of the Bulfinch-street Chapel, Boston, to be erected by the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, to take the place of the present chapel in Pitts Street, was laid on Wednesday, May 5. The order of services was as follows: Invocation; original hymn, by Miss Frances S. Merrill; selections from the Scriptures, by Rev. Henry W. Foote, of Boston; remarks, by Rev. Samuel H. Winkley, the pastor; prayer, and laying of the stone, by Rev. Chandler Robbins, D.D., of Boston, President of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches; doxology; benediction.

The Church of the First Congregational Society in Hubbardston, Mass., which has been remodelled, was rededicated on Wednesday, May 5. The services were conducted by Rev. William G. Scandlin, of Grafton; Rev. Edwin G. Adams, of Templeton; Rev. E. C. L. Browne, of Bolton; and others.

The Connecticut Valley Conference held its Annual Meeting at Chicopee, Mass., commencing on Tuesday evening, May 11, when a sermon was preached by Rev. H. R. Nye (Universalist), of Springfield, and continuing through the next day. The Annual Report of the Secretary, Rev. John F. Moors, of Greenfield, was presented; and an essay was read by Mr. F. B. Sanborn, of Springfield, on "The destruction of the poor," which was followed by a discussion; after which a committee of five was appointed to take the subject presented by Mr. Sanborn into consideration, and report at the next meeting of the Conference. Rev. John F. Moors read an essay on "The administration of religion demanded by the times," and a discussion followed. The old board of officers was re-elected.

Rev. THOMAS W. BROWN has resigned the charge of the Society in Sandwich, Mass.

Rev. FREDERIC N. KNAPP has accepted a call from the Society in Plymouth, Mass.

Rev. A. FREEMAN BAILEY has resigned the charge of the Society in Union Springs, N.Y.

Rev. EUGENE DE NORMANDIE has resigned the charge of the Society in Marlboro', Mass.

Rev. STEPHEN H. CAMP, of Toledo, Ohio, has accepted a call from the Third Unitarian Society in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rev. WILLIAM HAMILTON, has resigned the charge of the Society in Hyde Park, Mass.

Rev. EDWARD H. DANFORTH has resigned the charge of the Society in Sheffield, Ill.

Rev. ALBERT B. VORSE has resigned the charge of the Society in Littleton, Mass.

Mr. ANGUS R. KENNEDY, a graduate of the Cambridge Divinity School, has accepted a call from the Society in Tyngsboro', Mass.

Rev. RUFUS P. STEBBINS, D.D., of Cambridge, Mass., has accepted the appointment of the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association, as general missionary of that organization, and will enter upon his duties the first of June. The office is the same that was held a few years ago by Rev. William P. Tilden.

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

May 10, 1869. — Present: Messrs. Eliot, Smith, Cudworth, Hepworth, Livermore, Metcalf, Reynolds, Cobb, Crosby, Kennard, Lyman, Fox, and Lowe.

The Committee on Publications reported that books had been given to the Public Library, Staten Island, N.Y.; Parish Library of Unitarian Society, Northumberland, Penn.; Mercantile Library Association, Montreal, Canada; and Liberal Christian Union, Newchâtel, Switzerland.

They also reported in favor of appropriations for issuing new editions of the following books; which were voted: Hymn and

Tune Book, for the Church and Home, and Services for Congregational Worship; Hymn, Tune, and Service Book, for Sunday Schools; Social Hymns and Tunes; Memoir of Mary L. Ware; and Works of William E. Channing, D.D.

The Committee on the New-England States presented a report in which they recommended that Rev. Rufus P. Stebbins, D.D. be invited to act for one year as missionary of the Association, under the direction of the New-England States Committee, with a salary of $2,000. The following appropriations were also recommended: $100 towards the compensation of Rev. J. K. Waite, for services at Needham, Mass.; $100 in aid of the Society in New Salem, Mass., for one year; $200 to the Society in Exeter, N.H., for the year beginning June 1, 1869; and $100 to the Society in Brooklyn, Conn., for the year beginning June 1, 1869.

This report was adopted.

The Committee on the Western States submitted a report from Bishop Payne, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, President of Wilberforce University, concerning the use made of the appropriation for lectures, and aid for young men receiving education there; and also a report from Rev. Henry F. Bond, of missionary work.

They also reported in favor of the following appropriations; which were voted: $1,500 to Rev. G. W. Hosmer, D.D., and Rev. J. K. Hosmer, as compensation for services another year, as missionaries of the Association, in connection with their duties at Antioch College; and $400 to the Society in Mattoon, Ill., for the year beginning whenever they should settle a permanent pastor.

The Committee on the Middle and Southern States submitted reports from Mr. J. R. Fletcher, concerning his work in the education of colored pupils in Washington; from the teachers in Wilmington, N. C., under Miss Amy M. Bradley; and from Rev. H. C. Dugan, of his missionary work in Atco, and elsewhere in New Jersey.

The Committee on Theological Education presented a report recommending an appropriation of $500 to the Boston School for the Ministry; which was adopted.

The Secretary presented to the Board a communication from the Liberal Christian Union, Switzerland; and after it had been read, he was requested to reply to it in behalf of the Association, and to have it printed in the "Monthly Journal."

After the transaction of other business, the Board adjourned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

1869.			
April 30.	From	Second Church, Salem, including life memberships for Jonathan Perley, Mrs. N. H. Brooks, Miss Harriet Austin, D. A. Varney, Gardner Barton, S. T. Kimball, Mrs. J. A. Wallis, and J. A. Goldthwaite	$257.60
	"	Rev. John Murray, as annual membership	1.00
May 6.	"	friends in New Brunswick, N.J.	30.00
6.	"	subscribers to "Monthly Journal," in Brattleboro', Vt.	7.84
10.	"	Rev. J. B. Moore, and J. M. Everett, as annual memberships	2.00
11.	"	Rev. D. S. C. M. Potter, as annual membership	1.00
12.	"	Society in Montreal, Canada	150.00
12.	"	Anna P. Holmes to make herself a life membership	30.00
13.	"	Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, N. Y.	500.00
13.	"	Thompson Baxter, as annual membership	1.00
15.	"	Society in Vineland, N.J., for missionary work in Middle States	15.00
17.	"	North Society, Salem, additional	50.00
18.	"	J. T. Cotton, Southboro',	10.00
18.	"	Hollis-street Society, Boston, including $50 for India Mission	619.80
19.	"	Society in Keene, N.H., for Monthly Journals	30.00
20.	"	Ladies' Benevolent Society, of Parish in Uxbridge, to make its pastor, Rev. S. R. Priest, a life member	30.00

MISSIONARY SUNDAY CONTRIBUTIONS.

From South Congregational Society, Boston (in all $2,334) . $1,134.00

NOTE.

This Journal goes to press while the Anniversary Meetings are being held. But we refrain from presenting any account of them in order to give a connected report in our Anniversary Number.